

REMARKS

I. Status of Claims

After the above amendments, claims 1-6 and 8-13 are pending. Claims 1, 2, and 5 are independent.

II. Restriction Requirement

In the Office Action, the Examiner imposed a restriction requirement. Applicants provisionally elected Group 1, corresponding to claims 1-6. Applicants affirm the election of Group I, without traverse, and have cancelled non-elected claim 7.

III. Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,917,328 to Kobayashi in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,494,712 to Godwin, Jr. Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable in view of the Kobayashi patent, the Godwin, Jr. patent, and U.S. Patent App. No. 2002/0070304. Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable in view of the Kobayashi patent, the Godwin, Jr. patent, and U.S. Patent No. 3,913,868 to Katahira.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to address the rejections, and assert that claim 1, and its dependent claims, are now allowable. As amended, claim 1 requires ***"that the reel disc and the outer rim of the plate spring come into contact with each other to generate a torque by friction."*** As seen in, for example, Figure 4 of the pending application, the plate spring 37 comes into contact with the annular rib 33b located on the reel disc 33. The plate spring 37 and the reel disc 37 therefore function as a clutch.

None of the cited references, either alone or in the proposed combinations, disclose this limitation. In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the Kobayashi patent discloses a reel clutch "comprising a spring 5 positioned between a reel gear 3 and reel disc (lower portion of reel table 2) and a stopper reel (upper portion of reel table 2)" The Examiner further asserts that it would have been obvious to replace the coil spring 5 with a plate spring in view of the Godwin patent.

If modified in the manner suggested by the Office Action, the modified device of the Kobayashi patent would not meet the limitation "that the reel disc and the outer rim of the plate spring come into contact with each other to generate a torque by friction." Rather, in the modified device, the *central portion* of the plate spring would come into contact with the reel disc of the Kobayashi patent. Furthermore, in the modified device, the contact between the felt 4 and the reel gear 3 would generate the torque by friction, rather than the contact between the reel disc and the plate spring as called for by claim 1. Accordingly, the modified Kobayashi device does not disclose, nor does it suggest, the limitations of amended claim 1. Claim 1 (and its dependent claims) is therefore allowable, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

IV. New Claims

Applicants have added new claims 8-13. These claims address additional features of the present invention. Applicants believe that these claims are allowable, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

V. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objected to claims 2, 5, and 6, but indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten into independent format. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowability and have amended those claims appropriately.

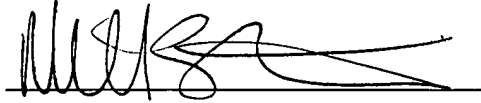
VI. Conclusion

In view of the above, it is believed that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Appl. No. 10/670,418
Amdt. dated April 29, 2005
Reply to Office Action of February 1, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

Date: April 29, 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Stimson', written over a horizontal line.

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